

REMARKS

Claims 2, 3, 6-11 and 21-28 are pending in this application. To correct errors made in the August 12 Amendment, by this Amendment, claims 3, 7 and 9 are amended, claims 22-28 are added, and claims 4 and 5 are cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter contained therein. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants provide the following additional Remarks on the rejection of claim 2 under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-63-382843 (JP'843). Further to the Remarks in the August 12 Amendment, Applicants respectfully submit that upon contact of a tool and a workpiece, the override controller 4 of JP'843 instigates a change in an override signal to protect the tool from breakdown. More particularly, JP'843 discloses an override signal that is maintained at a high level when the tool and the workpiece are not in contact with each other and then, upon contact between the tool and the workpiece, the override signal is lowered by the override controller 4. Thus, the controller 4 of JP'843 is not a checking device that checks if a contact detecting device is in a normal condition.

For at least these reasons and the reasons discussed in the August 12 Amendment, Applicants submit that JP'843 fails to disclose or suggest all the features of claim 2. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 3-6 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over JP-8-141804 (JP'804). The rejection of claims 4 and 5 is rendered moot by the cancellation of claims 4 and 5. The rejection of claims 3 and 6 is traversed at least in view of August 12 comments and the following additional comments. Applicants respectfully submit that JP'804 fails to disclose or suggest, a method of detecting contact and separation of a cutting blade that comprises, *inter alia*, a step of bringing the cutting blade and the object into contact with each other, while a conductive layer having an electrical conductivity is provided in a space between the

cutting blade and the object; and a step of detecting contact and separation of the cutting blade with and from the object, based on a transition from an open state of the on-off circuit to a closed state of the on-off circuit, wherein the on-off circuit is in the open state when the cutting blade is separated from the object, and the on-off circuit is in the closed state when the cutting blade is in contact with the object, as recited in amended claim 3.

For at least these reasons and the reasons discussed in the August 12 Amendment, Applicants submit that JP'804 fails to disclose or suggest all the features of claim 3 as well as all the features of claims 6, 21 and 22, which depend from claim 3. Thus, Applicants respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

With regard to new claims 23-28, Applicants respectfully submit that JP'804 fails to disclose or suggest, a method of detecting contact and separation of a cutting blade held by a blade holding member that comprises, *inter alia*, a step of bringing said cutting blade and said object into contact with each other, while a conductive layer having an electrical conductivity is provided in a space between said cutting blade and said blade holding member, and a step of detecting contact and separation of said cutting blade with and from said object, based on transition from an open state of said on-off circuit to a closed state of said on-off circuit, wherein said on-off circuit is in said open state when said cutting blade is separated from said object, and said on-off circuit is in said closed stated when said cutting blade is in contact with said object, as recited in independent claim 23.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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